

The Writing Fundamentals mini-lessons are based on models of best practice. Each mini-lesson is very targeted, one page, and focused on a specific skill or strategy.

Each Writing Fundamentals Unit guides teachers and students through stages of the Writing Process with carefully-crafted, **teacher-friendly mini-lessons.**

Each Unit of Study is comprised of 20+ mini-lessons.

The components of each mini-lesson are:

Rationale:
An introductory explanation of what is being taught and why.

Preparation:
A list of materials teachers and students will need to complete the lesson, including the touchstone text(s) used in the lesson.



Writing Fundamentals

Generating Ideas IV: Zooming in on Small Details

2-3 Launching

Teaching:

Inform

Today, we are going to look at how writers take a big idea and zoom in on that idea to find important details. These small details help the reader understand what the writer is trying to say, and they often create pictures in the reader's mind. Today we will begin to use our photos and artifacts by zooming in on small details that say and mean a lot.

Present

Judith Caseley wanted to show the reader the special, loving bond that Annie and her grandpa share. That's her big idea. To do that, she zooms in on one small part of their relationship, the special cards they send each other. *Read the first page of Dear Annie.* Like a camera, the picture focuses the reader's attention on the rose on the cover of the card. The words zoom in on that small detail and explain why the reader should pay attention to what's on the card. Grandpa tells Annie that the rose on the card he sent reminds him of her. Every time Grandpa sends her a card, he uses the picture to focus some special detail he wants to share with Annie. *Turn to the page with the ballerina card, and read it as well as the two short letters that follow (through the King Henry VIII card).* See how both Grandpa and Annie refer to the pictures and use them as a starting point for their notes to one another? When Annie and her grandfather write, they talk about small details from the cards they've chosen and explain why those little details are important.

Engage

Let me show you how we can zoom in on some small details to tell the reader more about our big picture. *Show students a photo or souvenir and*

begin a chart such as, "Our Trip to the Fair." This picture was taken at the entrance. I want to tell the reader how much fun being with my family was on this day (this is my big idea), so I have to zoom in on some of the fun things we did, like bumper cars and a Ferris wheel, and all the food we ate: the funnel cakes, hot dogs, and chocolate-dipped bananas! Looking at the photo makes me remember a lot of the small details of that special day. Now look at your photos or mementos that you brought in to share. What do you think of? What is the big idea you want your reader to know? *Have students share their mementos and the big ideas behind them as a class or with a partner.*

Reiterate

I want you to think about zooming in today. Take your big idea or big picture that we just discussed, and focus in on some of the small details that are part of that picture. *Have students see how many small details they can write on the worksheet provided in the Appendix, or in their Writer's Notebook, about the snapshot, postcard, or other artifact that they brought to class.*

Conference Questions:

- What big idea did you write about today?
- What specific details will help your reader connect with your topic?

Extension:

To help students further narrow their focus, have them reread the writing they did today and choose one line or word to use as the beginning of a new piece of writing.

Appendix:

"Zooming In"

- **Teaching:**
The language of each lesson has been carefully crafted to support teachers in presenting the lesson in a specific, clear, and organized manner.

Inform: Teacher tells the students what is going to be presented and how it will address their needs.

Present: Teacher demonstrates or models the skill or strategy.

Engage: Students practice the skill or strategy.

Reiterate: Teacher restates the skill or strategy and why it is important.

- **Conference Questions:**
Questions designed to connect teachers to individual student's work.

- **Extensions:**
Ways to extend teaching as well as ideas for home-school connections and follow-up lessons.

- **Appendices:**
Reproducibles including charts, homework, graphic organizers, letters to parents, and more.



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